HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

The Effects of Gender and Psychopathy on Murderers

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According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, there were an estimated 1,214,462 violent crimes committed in 2012. In order to reduce this number, it is imperative to first recognize why these individuals commit these crimes. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of gender and psychopathy on murderers in order to predict if certain characteristics were correlative to their heinous crimes. Both male ($N = 30$) and female ($N = 30$) murderers in the Indiana prison system were used. *Hare's Psychopathy Checklist-Revised* (PCL-R) was used to determine the psychopathic level score, which is used to project the recidivism rate of the individual. It was expected that male and female murderers would exhibit contrasting levels of psychopathy on the PCL-R test.

The predicted results concluded male murderers scored highest on the PCL-R test ($M = 23.53$), in conjunction with those exhibiting high psychopathic levels ($M = 31.45$). The neuropathologies of these characteristics were also reviewed. Research proved that an individual with a smaller prefrontal cortex and smaller amygdala showed psychopathic characteristics. By recognizing specific psychopathic characteristics in an individual, professionals could offer assistance to those displaying these characteristics in order to prevent additional crimes from occurring.

Research advisor Phuong Do writes, "Robert Viater and Jessica Rose were two exceptional students who took my class Research Methods in Psychology in the fall of 2013. Both worked diligently on their research proposal and excelled at every task throughout the class. I commend them for putting their hearts and souls into their work."

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